



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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STEP 2: DETERMINATION of whether to PREFERABLY PRESERVE

Site: 13 Clyde Street

Case: HPC.DMO 2020-20

Applicant: Scott Zink

Owner: Clyde St., LLC/Scott Zink

Proposal: *Demolish principal structure.*

HPC Meeting Date: October 20, 2020



Top: *Front elevation*

Bottom l – r: *Left elevation, right elevation, rear elevation*



I. MEETING SUMMARY: Determination of Significance

On Tuesday, September 15, 2020, the HPC voted the principal structure at 24 Webster Avenue to be “historically significant”.

In their deliberations the HPC noted that this structure was historically significant based on criteria “i” and “ii” of Section 2.17.B of the Demolition Review Ordinance (DRO) 2003-05. The HPC noted that, despite later additions, the original massing and original form of this structure are still evident.

The HPC discussed that 13 Clyde Street is typical of workers’ cottages in a particular clutch of workers’ cottages in the immediate area. The structure is representative of the broad economic, cultural, and social history of the City. The HPC also noted that this building type is now relatively scarce in the City.

II. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Refer to the Staff report on “historic significance” for a full description of the documentation previously provided on this property.

Additional information concerning this type of workers’ housing is below:

At one time there were numerous similar workers’ houses with high brick foundations in Somerville. Numerous others were located in Cambridge, built by many of the same developers and landowners as those in Somerville such as Murdock, according to the *Survey of Northwest Cambridge* published by the Cambridge Historical Commission in 1977.

Also according to the *Survey* it is believed that these high-brick foundation workers’ houses are related to the rise in multi-family housing. The unit at ground (foundation) level would be accessed at grade while a long exterior stairway, often located on the front façade, would provide access to the upper unit. Fireplaces built on the rear wall were also not unusual. Two chimney stacks remain on what would have been the rear wall of the original 13 Clyde Street building. The stacks would have originally run from ground level and likely through each level above, presumably providing a fireplace on at least the ground and first floors. Similar houses built in Cambridge also present this construction. It appears that a similar construction pattern developed in both Somerville and Cambridge in the years leading up to the Civil War that was utilized to provide working class housing for those laboring in nearby industries such as brickyards.

III. FINDINGS ON PREFERABLE PRESERVATION

If the Commission determines that the demolition of the significant building or structure would be detrimental to the architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social heritage of the City, such building or structure shall be considered a preferably preserved building or structure. (Ordinance 2003-05, Section 4.2.d) A determination regarding if the demolition of the subject building is detrimental to the architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social heritage of the City should consider the following:

How does this building or structure compose or reflect features which contribute to the heritage of the City?

- a) *What is the remaining integrity of the structure? The National Park Service defines integrity as the ability of a property to convey significance.*

The period of relevance for the house starts before the Civil War, roughly 1850-1860.

- a. Location: The structure is in its original location.
- b. Design: Original structure is a 1.5-story side-gabled, wood-framed worker's house with a high brick foundation. A high staircase provides center-entry access. Front façade is three bays wide. Windows at foundation level. Windows symmetrically placed under each side gable and on story below. Two rear wall chimney stacks.
- c. Materials: Wood frame; brick foundation; currently vinyl-sided; replacement windows; asphalt shingle roof.
- d. Alterations: Vinyl siding added; windows replaced; rear addition; enclosed front entry.

Evaluation of Integrity: The building retains clear integrity of original form and massing; gable returns remain present as well some original window locations; brick foundation. Two rear wall chimney stacks are extant.

What is the level (local, state, national) of significance?

Local significance

What is the visibility of the structure with regard to public interest (Section 2.17.B.ii) if demolition were to occur?

The structure is highly visible along Clyde Street and is part of a grouping of similar/related structures in the immediate area.

What is the scarcity or frequency of this type of resource in the City?

As noted by the HPC in their determination of historical significance, this building type is now scarce in Somerville.

Upon a consideration of the above criteria, is the demolition of the subject building detrimental to the architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social heritage of the City?

Staff offers no assessment on this criterion.

IV. VOTE

1. The HPC must vote whether or not demolition of the structure at 13 Clyde Street would be detrimental to the City in terms of impact on Somerville's
 - architectural heritage
 - cultural heritage
 - political heritage
 - economic heritage
 - social heritage.
2. If the HPC determines that the demolition of the structure would be detrimental to the City based on any of the criteria above, the HPC must support its position with explanations of *why* demolition would be detrimental based on the evidence presented and observations made by the Commission.
3. If the HPC determines that the demolition of the structure would *not* be detrimental to the City based on the criteria above, the HPC must support its position with explanations of *why* demolition would not be detrimental.